

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0533

August 22, 2016

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554  
Dear Chairman Wheeler,

Thank you for opening an investigation on April 20 into the Signaling System Number 7 (SS7) flaw. This defect allows foreign governments, criminal syndicates and sophisticated hackers--if they simply know a cell phone number--to acquire voice communications and text messages from the target cell phone. In light of the recent cyber hack at the DCCC that released cell phone numbers of all Democratic Members of Congress--reportedly conducted by the Russian Government--our foreign adversaries can now acquire cell phone voice and text data of over 180 Congress members with impunity. This problem is particularly acute given reports that Russia is trying to influence elections in America.

I write to request that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) expedite its investigation of the SS7 flaw and for the FCC to give an estimate of when the investigation will be completed. I also write to request the FCC provide me and other affected Members of Congress with what it has learned so far about the SS7 flaw so that we can respond appropriately to the recent hack.

The SS7 problem is no longer a theoretical threat. We now have a mass release of cell phone numbers of Members of Congress likely caused by a Russian government that has full access to utilize the SS7 flaw. Because we don't know how long the hackers had access to this information, it is very possible nearly half of Congress has already had voice and text data intercepted. Other enemy adversaries, such as North Korea and Iran, could also take this information and acquire the cell phone voice and text data of multiple Members of Congress. The ramifications of the SS7 flaw can be severe, both for our national security and the integrity of American elections.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

Cc: Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Hon. Ben Ray Lujan  
Mike Dabbs



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

October 14, 2016

The Honorable Ted Lieu  
U.S. House of Representatives  
415 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lieu:

Thank you for your letter sharing your concerns regarding the Commission's inquiry into the Signaling System Number 7 (SS7) protocol.

As communications technologies transition from legacy systems and networks to new all IP-networks, there is a potential for new cyber and security risks. Unfortunately, a legacy protocol such as SS7 exemplifies these vulnerabilities. For this reason, earlier this year, the Commission tasked the Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) to examine vulnerabilities associated with the SS7 protocol and other key communications protocols. CSRIC has established a working group to assess vulnerabilities and current defensive mechanisms related to SS7 security and to make recommendations to the FCC on solutions. After meeting with several communications security experts both within and outside of the U.S. on the SS7 security issues, the group provided its initial risk assessment brief at its September meeting. CSRIC will submit a final report with recommendations to the Commission in March of next year.

In the meantime, the FCC continues to scrutinize our numbering initiatives and the increased concerns regarding robocalling to identify how underlying SS7 vulnerabilities may contribute to risks in these areas. We continue to work with our federal government and communications sector partners to bring about meaningful solutions and risk mitigation strategies that will address the SS7 problem and continue the Commission's mission of ensuring that communications networks are secure, reliable and resilient.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Tom Wheeler